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Reviews

G. Ross Roy. *Robert Burns*. Bibliographical Series No. 1 (Columbia, S. C.). University of South Carolina. 1966. 24 pp. \$1.00.

This is a catalogue of an exhibition of books and manuscripts selected from Mr. Ross Roy's fine collection. It was held in the Library of the University of South Carolina early in 1966. The only items in the exhibition not recorded in this catalogue are those that were in a case devoted to likenesses of Burns, a regrettable lack because we need all materials might lead to an iconography of Burns in the modern manner, which could complete the excellent but too brief study by Basil C. Skinner and which lives up to the standards of accuracy and amplitude set by William Wimsatt in his recent book on the likenesses of Alexander Pope. If this exhibition contains a representative selection of Mr. Roy's collection, it must be judged the best private Burns collection in America.

The first section of the catalogue (items 1-27) presents rare books, chapbooks, pamphlets and periodicals of works by Burns or related to him, including several interesting items not found in the largest Burns collections, for instance, at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow and the Murison Collection in the Carnegie Central Library at Dunfermline. There is a *Catalogue of Five Hundred Authors* (London, 1787), which contains the first printed notice of Burns exclusive of reviews. There is Burns' first published letter, the one to the Earl of Buchan, as it appeared in the Edinburgh periodical *The Bee* in 1791. There are two collections of Scots poems which modishly imitated the Kilmarnock title: by Andrew Shirrefs (Edinburgh, 1790) and by Robert Wilson (Edinburgh, 1822). And there are two pamphlets by John Learmont containing verse replies to "The Kirk's Alarm," "Man Was Made to Mourn," and "Address to the Deil" (Edinburgh, 1799; and London, 1791).

The second section (items 28-33) lists and describes holograph manuscripts, including two autograph signed letters to Agnes M'Lehose previously inaccurately printed; one ALS to John Syme, in the form of the poetic epistle "O had the Malt thy strength of mind"; and another to Robert Cleghorn (Oct. ? 1791), first published in Ferguson's *Letters*.

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There are two brief song fragments previously unpublished, both of which are given in facsimile: two stanzas of an early version of "Aye wauken O" and two stanzas beginning "As I walk'd by myself . . .," which celebrates the same sentiment as "I hae a wife o' my ain" (Dick, p. 72).

The third section (items 34-104) contains chapbooks and editions or reprints which J. W. Egerer in his recent *Bibliography* (1964) either missed entirely or saw in a different form or did not see at all and recorded incompletely or inaccurately from bibliographies and catalogues. This section allows this catalogue to serve as a supplement to Egerer. Later editions are of little use except to pure collectors, unless they contain new manuscript or valuable editorial material, contingencies far too little noted in checklists and bibliographies. Since Mr. Roy does not indicate that any of these later editions contains new matter, we are, presumably, to believe that they do not and that their value lies in providing a census, a basis for reputation studies. There are a number of remarkable early items, however: a chapbook of 1799 published in Edinburgh by George Gray with three poems, the celebrated *Merry Muses* of 1799 with the complete title page, and an Oliver edition of 1801 containing three leaves which Egerer designated as cancelled on the basis of the only other recorded copy—Mr. Roy should have indicated what they contained. The catalogue has four plates of eight title pages.

In his note to the 1793 and 1797 *Poems* (items 7, 8) Mr. Roy mentions the 1794 edition (Egerer No. 29) without availing himself of the opportunity of reaffirming the interesting and little-recognized fact that Burns made changes in the text for that edition. Although Egerer did not know this, Henley and Henderson were aware of it: "On the advice of Tyler and others, certain new readings were introduced [in the 1794 edition]" (I, 316). And a simple collation shows substantive variants which are obviously authorial: e.g., from "Great lies and nonsense baith to vend" to "A rousing whid at times to vend" in "Death and Doctor Hornbook," stanza 1. But Mr. Roy has recently announced (*Modern Philology*, LXIV, 1967, 360) unexpected proof: there exists a set of sheets from Vol. I of the 1793 edition corrected by the poet himself! Mr. Roy promises a study establishing the 1794 edition "as the most authoritative text," by which he evidently means the most authoritative for substantives, not certainly accidentals, for which one will still have to return to the *earliest* editions.

Although he knows better, Mr. Roy's account of what have come to be known as the *skinking* and *stinking* Edinburgh editions of 1787

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(Egerer No. 2) is somewhat inaccurate, especially noticeable in a confusion of terminology: there are two *editions* and not two "states of this edition" or a first and a "second issue." He fails to make clear that the two editions exist in two different printings for signatures A-Mn (except for the invariant Kk) and that perhaps about ten percent of existing volumes are composed of mixed gatherings of these sheets, that is, some signatures from the first and some from the second edition. Further, it should be more generally known that Burns read proof only for the first edition of the sheets in question and that there is at least one variant, if only in type alignment, on every single page of the thirty-four signatures, the *skinking-stinking* one in li being only the most notorious. Consequently, one who claims an edition of 1787 to be the first or the second must check all thirty-four sheets to establish the complete purity of the edition. Another consequence is that only an unmixed first edition can serve as copy-text for the fifteen new poems Burns first printed in these sheets. This truth has not yet been understood by editors of Burns.

All this is fully and clearly established and explained in a classic but neglected article written twenty years ago by Edwin Wolf II and published in *The Library Chronicle* of the University of Pennsylvania (April, 1947, XIV, 3-14). I would like to use this occasion, arbitrarily but usefully, to reprint here with Mr. Wolf's permission the list of key variants in each signature by which all those who possess an edition of 1787 can readily determine whether it is a pure first or pure second or a mixture. It should be remembered that these are by no means all the variants, but just convenient ones to determine the edition of each sheet. Only edition I has any authority for the poems in the sheets in question.

Key Variants in each of the sheets which exist in two printings:

			I	II
A	p. [9]	line 2	o'	of
B	p. 20	line 11	dull an'	dull, an'
C	p. 27	line 7	mysel	mysell
D	p. 37	title	[swash T]	[straight T]
E	p. 47	line 2	an'	and
F	p. 53	line 1	O Wives be	O Wives! be
G	p. 61	line 9	Ev'n	E'en
H	p. 67	line 22	heartfelt	heart-felt
I	p. 73	last line	ugly, Gothic	ugly Gothic
K	p. 87	line 12	<i>gospel kail</i>	<i>gospel-kail</i>

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L	p. 93	last line	He're	Here
M	p. 97	line 11	Oh!	O!
N	p. 109	line 2	taen	ta'en
O	p. 115	line 9	sterling	Sterling
P	p. 123	line 6	Potentate o' W——	<i>Potentate o' W——</i>
Q	p. 133	line 3	expel	expell
R	p. 144	line 3	heaped	heapet
S	p. 146	line 8	aiblins	ablins
T	p. 156	line 8	ance	aince
U	p. 165	note	'	" "
X	p. 169	line 4	An' . . . and	And . . . an'
Y	p. 179	line 5	day, I	day I
Z	p. 187	line 18	<i>Parritch</i>	<i>Porritch</i>
Aa	p. 193	line 12	GOD	God
Bb	p. 208	line 10	well	we'll
Cc	p. 210	line 5	I, here wha sit,	I here wha sit
Dd	p. 224	line 3	wand'red	wander'd
Ee	p. 231	line 2	winter-day	Winter-day
Ff	p. 235	line 16	thee	Thee
Gg	p. 241	line 1	Thou	THOU
Hh	p. 252	line 1	Lang	LANG
Ii	p. 263	line 13	skinking	stinking
Ll	p. 279	line 11	thirl'd	thrill'd
Mm	p. 283	line 3	But gif	But, gif

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